



# COUNCIL

## Hundred and Seventy-seventh Session

Rome, 7-11 April 2025

### Report of the 140th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 10-14 March 2025)

#### Executive summary

In the Report of its 140th Session, the Programme Committee:

- 1) **brings to the attention of the Council for its consideration and endorsement**, the recommendations and conclusions on: the Reviewed Strategic Framework 2022-31; the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 and Programme of Work and Budget 2026-27; the Assessment of recommendations for the Office of Evaluation from external audits, evaluations, and reviews (including recommendations regarding the FAO Evaluation Policy); the Evaluation of FAO's implementation of Conference Resolution 7/2019 "Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO", including the balance of the full range of sustainable agriculture approaches and systems and Management Response; the Roadmap for the update of the Private Sector Engagement Strategy; the Update on FAO Roadmap: Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold; and the Update on data for statistics and statistics functions;
- 2) **informs the Council** of the Programme Committee's consideration related to: the Renewal of the Term of Office of the Director, Office of Evaluation (OED); the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report-2024; the Update on Food Systems Transformation work at the FAO; the Update on FAO's engagement in: a. the Sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 16); b. the Twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29); c. the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 16); and d. the work with the World Trade Organization; and the formal request from PC Members to the Director of the Office of Evaluation for the compilation of recommendations and their status on structural reforms in both internal and external evaluations under Any Other Matters.

### Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to:

- 1) **endorse** the recommendations and conclusions of the Committee on:
  - a) the Reviewed Strategic Framework 2022-31;
  - b) the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 and Programme of Work and Budget 2026-27;
  - c) the Assessment of recommendations for the Office of Evaluation from external audits, evaluations, and reviews (including recommendations regarding the FAO Evaluation Policy);
  - d) the Evaluation of FAO's implementation of Conference Resolution 7/2019 "Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO", including the balance of the full range of sustainable agriculture approaches and systems and Management Response;
  - e) the Roadmap for the update of the Private Sector Engagement Strategy;
  - f) the Update on FAO Roadmap: Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold; and
  - g) the Update on data for statistics and statistics functions;
- 2) **note** the Committee's considerations on:
  - a) the Renewal of the Term of Office of the Director, Office of Evaluation (OED);
  - b) the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report-2024;
  - c) the Update on Food Systems Transformation work at the FAO;
  - d) the Update on FAO's engagement in: a. the Sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 16); b. the Twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29); c. the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 16); and d. the work with the World Trade Organization; and
  - e) Any Other Matters: the formal request from PC Members to the Director of the Office of Evaluation for the compilation of recommendations and their status on structural reforms in both internal and external evaluations.

*Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:*

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## I. Introduction

1. The Programme Committee (PC) submitted to the Council the following Report of its 140th Session.
2. In addition to the Chairperson, Ms Yael Rubinstein (Israel), the following representatives of Members were present:

Ms Alicia Silvana Barone (Argentina)	Ms Jenny Reid (New Zealand) <sup>3</sup>
H.E. (Ms) Carla Barroso Carneiro (Brazil) <sup>1</sup>	H.E. (Ms) Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile (South Africa) <sup>4</sup>
Mr Maarten de Groot (Canada) <sup>2</sup>	H.E. (Ms) Krisztina Bende (Switzerland) <sup>5</sup>
Mr SHINDO Mitsuaki (Japan)	Ms Jacqueline Boniface Mbuya (United Republic of Tanzania)
Mr Anwar Faiz Othman (Malaysia)	
H.E. (Mr) Marcel Beukeboom (Netherlands [Kingdom of the])	

3. Sudan was not represented.

## II. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

4. The Committee requested to add an item on the PC letter to the Director, Office of Evaluation, regarding compilation of recommendations on structural reforms in both internal and external evaluations, under Item 15 – Any Other Matters, and adopted the Provisional Agenda for the Session, as amended.

## III. Reviewed Strategic Framework 2022-31

5. The Committee:
  - a) welcomed the updated analysis of global developments and challenges to agrifood systems, and took note of the drivers and triggers for agrifood systems transformation identified in the Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise, noting the importance of trade across the 18 Drivers of agrifood systems;
  - b) emphasized the need for a tailored approach in the regions with unique socio-economic contexts marked by disparities, conflicts and vulnerability to climate change, with focus on climate adaptation, food security, adoption of innovation and building local capacity for the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems;
  - c) re-emphasized the essential role of the normative work of FAO including standard setting and its necessary resources allocation;
  - d) re-emphasized the importance of maintaining and improving the work on data and statistics of the Organization, including regional and subregional coverage;
  - e) highlighted the importance for FAO to maintain and develop partnerships to achieve its mandate, without losing sight of the Member-driven processes, including at decentralized level, as well as working as One FAO;

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Paulo José Chiarelli V. de Azevedo was designated to replace H.E. (Ms) Carla Barroso Carneiro for part of the Session.

<sup>2</sup> Ms Qamer Hameed was designated to replace Mr Maarten de Groot for part of the Session.

<sup>3</sup> Ms Clara Beauvoir was designated to replace Ms Jenny Reid for part of the Session.

<sup>4</sup> Mr Jaimal Anand was designated to replace H.E. (Ms) Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile.

<sup>5</sup> Isabelle Fragnière was designated to replace H.E. (Ms) Krisztina Bende for part of the Session.

- f) reiterated the importance of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and all its policy products to realize the FAO Strategic Framework, and encouraged Management to incorporate them in its work;
- g) emphasized the importance of the right to food as a mainstreamed principle in FAO's programme of work;
- h) stressed the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) for delivering FAO's mandate on the ground, and requested Management to further elaborate on the role of the TCP under the Reviewed Strategic Framework; and
- i) looked forward to further deliberation on the Reviewed Strategic Framework in the upcoming Session of the Council, for endorsement by the 44th Session of the Conference.

#### **IV. Medium Term Plan 2026-29 and Programme of Work and Budget 2026-27**

##### 6. The Committee:

- a) highlighted the importance of discussing the programmatic implications of the distribution of assessed and voluntary contributions for the effective implementation of FAO programmes, as well as different types of voluntary contributions, and encouraged FAO Members, as at the 43rd Session of the Conference, to pursue discussions to this aim, and requested to discuss this at the next Session of the Joint Meeting;
- b) appreciated the integrated presentation of all sources of funding, and welcomed Management's efforts to continue to deliver the Programme of Work in the context of increasing needs and unprecedented challenges;
- c) recalled that further refinements to the Programme of Work would be provided in the *Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2026-27*, for discussion at the Programme Committee at its next Session, following guidance from the 44th Session of the FAO Conference;
- d) stressed the importance of FAO's normative and standard-setting work, and the need for adequate resource allocation from the Regular Budget, and welcomed the increased allocations to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission of USD 0.5 million each as a good start, and requested that other important conventions, treaty bodies and intergovernmental arrangements receive necessary funding;
- e) stressed the centrality of FAO's work on data and statistics and reiterated the need for sufficient funding allocation;
- f) emphasized the need for FAO to analyse the mandate and rationalize budget allocation to the Office of Youth and Women to focus on the FAO's core mandate and the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP);
- g) requested informal consultations on the detailed content of the Programme of Work and Budget in a timely manner to enable Members of the PC to undertake the necessary analysis;
- h) noted the updates to formulations of the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) under the *four betters*, as well as on Chapter 5, as presented in Annex 1, and requested that, in the *Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2026-27 Annex 1 - Updated results framework 2026-29*:
  - i. on One Health (BP3):
    - (1) revert to the formulation on the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, in line with the working definition of the One Health High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP),

- and indicate that the concept refers to human, animal, plant and the environment, in line with FAO's mandate;
- (2) align language to the One Health Joint Plan of Action 2022-2026 and adopt a risk-management approach, and continue strengthening linkages and capacity in this regard;
  - (3) reflect the approach of the FAO/WHO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management;
  - (4) ensure ongoing alignment with the One Health Joint Plan of Action 2022-2026; and
  - (5) ensure a balanced approach, in line with FAO's mandate and in accordance with the working definition of OHHLEP.
- ii. mainstream the references to *the progressive realization of the right to adequate food* as appropriate;
  - iii. reflect the needs of farmers across all scales for innovation, credit and financial services, as well as their participation across the supply chain;
  - iv. maintain alignment across applicable multilateral environment agreements;
  - v. reaffirmed the role of open and rules-based trade to achieve the FAO Strategic Framework and recommended Management to better integrate work on agriculture trade analysis and evidence across the relevant PPAs, with the necessary resources allocation;
  - vi. noted the areas of emphasis and de-emphasis and requested Management to provide further details in the PPAs currently only listing general principles;
  - vii. noted that deployment of bioeconomy innovations should be broad;
  - viii. noted the importance of promoting healthy diets;
  - ix. noted that the establishment of food and nutrition governance and coordination mechanisms should be in accordance with national priorities and capacities; and
  - x. recognized FAO's continued efforts to integrate outcomes of relevant forums and remain responsive to ongoing discussions.
- i) reiterated the importance of CFS and all its voluntary policy products to realize the FAO Strategic Framework, requested Management to incorporate them in its work as relevant, and requested to include the *CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises* under BL3 - *Agriculture and Food Emergencies*;
  - j) requested Management to include explanations to justify the level of ambition proposed through the output indicators and milestones including the evidence underpinning their selection;
  - k) requested FAO to strengthen its results narrative in support of securing commitments to its efforts;
  - l) highlighted agroecology and other innovative approaches as an important approach to achieving sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems, and recommended FAO to strengthen the integration of agroecology and other innovative approaches in the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 and Programme of Work and Budget 2026-27 (MTP/PWB) with appropriate resource allocation; and
  - m) took note of areas for transformational impact summarized in *Annex 12* mobilization, and invited Members to consider such areas for voluntary contributions, recalling the importance of the provision of less-earmarked voluntary contributions.

## V. Mid-term Review Synthesis Report – 2024

7. The Committee noted the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report (MTR) 2024, in particular its new addition to this MTR, *FAO's Performance at a Glance*.

**VI. Assessment of recommendations for the Office of Evaluation from external audits, evaluations, and reviews (including recommendations regarding the FAO Evaluation Policy)**

8. The Committee:
- a) welcomed the comprehensive assessment of recommendations received by the Office of Evaluation (2012-2024) in response to the conclusions on Item 8 *Update on the FAO Evaluation policy* at the 139th Session of the Programme Committee;
  - b) recognized the progress OED has already made in responding to many outstanding recommendations over the past two years;
  - c) underlined the importance of addressing open recommendations with a holistic and, whenever possible with a clear deadline and in the most administratively efficient manner, and a collaborative approach to institutionalize evaluation practices at FAO, strengthen the oversight function, and ensure the independence of OED;
  - d) encouraged OED to serve in an advisory capacity on results based management on key FAO management documents, in coordination with lead divisions;
  - e) welcomed implementation of recommendation 4 *OED should establish a registry of its recommendations, with a system for following up. This would require an IT-based, searchable registry of recommendations and management responses from 2025 onwards designed for data analysis, with an annual follow-up and update;*
  - f) noted the deadline provided for the recommendations reference number 3 and 7 is set for the 2025 Autumn PC Session;
  - g) welcomed the development of a learning agenda for evaluation as an important tool for guiding the selection of evaluations on an ongoing basis; and
  - h) requested that OED provide regular updates, in the Autumn PC Session of each year until all recommendations are closed, and welcomed the organization of an informal meeting in June 2025.

**VII. Evaluation of FAO's implementation of Conference Resolution 7/2019 "Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO", including the balance of the full range of sustainable agriculture approaches and systems and Management Response**

9. The Committee:
- a) took note of the report, its findings, and recommendations, as well as the Management Response;
  - b) recognized the increasing integration of sustainable agricultural approaches in FAO's portfolio of projects;
  - c) emphasized the need for continued integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, biotechnology and other innovative approaches, sustainable intensification and bioeconomy within the execution of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, ensuring a balanced consideration of the full range of approaches and systems;
  - d) supported Management taking stock of sustainable agricultural approaches and looked forward to further discussions;
  - e) highlighted FAO's leading role in advancing sustainable agricultural approaches as a key element in transforming agrifood systems; and

- f) welcomed Core Leaders' engagement with relevant technical units to better support mainstreaming and contextualizing sustainable agricultural approaches and inform the development of new approaches, and looked forward to the implementation of the recommendations and timely reporting about the results.

### **VIII. Renewal of the Term of Office of the Director, Office of Evaluation (OED)**

10. In accordance with paragraph 43 of the Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation, the Programme Committee supported the proposed renewal of the appointment of Ms Clemencia Cosentino as Director of Evaluation for a further and final term of four years based on the quantity and quality of the evaluation reports sent to the Committee, and her performance in this current term of office.

### **IX. Roadmap for the update of the Private Sector Engagement Strategy**

11. The Committee:

- a) noted the relevance of integrating lessons learned and results from the implementation of the *Private Sector Engagement Strategy 2021-2025*, and welcomed the roadmap for updating the FAO Private Sector Engagement Strategy 2026-2030, recognizing the importance of an evidence-based and consultative approach to enhance inclusivity and effectiveness;
- b) noted with appreciation FAO's ongoing efforts in the integration of best practices from Rome-based Agencies, the UN Global Compact, and other international organizations to enhance the effectiveness and impact of FAO's engagements with the private sector to implement its mandate including at country level;
- c) welcomed the emphasis on decentralization, ensuring that regional and country-level priorities are well integrated into the updated strategy;
- d) encouraged FAO to be transparent about the role of the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) and private sector actors/partners holding formal status with FAO in providing valuable inputs and encouraged FAO to explore more ways to augment the visibility of PSAG and looked forward to the publication of a report on activities and contributions of PSAG by May 2025;
- e) recognized the significance of a structured and phased approach, with key milestones including information gathering, drafting, validation and finalization, and submission and endorsement, to ensure a robust and comprehensive strategy update;
- f) emphasized the importance to timely engage with FAO Members, Decentralized Offices, and technical divisions throughout the consultative process, including formal and informal briefings on the results from different phases in the development of the updated Strategy; and
- g) looked forward to an informal consultation before summer as part of the first draft phase and to reviewing the updated Strategy in the next Session of the Programme Committee in November 2025 leading up to the final document including discussions of the Committee for decision by the FAO Council in December 2025.

### **X. Update on FAO Roadmap: Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold**

12. The Committee:

- a) noted the update provided on the progress made in further strengthening the FAO Global Roadmap: Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold;

- b) reiterated the importance to be country demand driven and adapted to local settings in countries with particular attention to domestic specificities, priorities, and natural contexts such as various ecosystems;
- c) emphasized that support provided by FAO under this roadmap should complement support provided for implementation of countries' commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, without duplication of efforts; and
- d) emphasized the importance of ongoing communication about process and results with Members and external stakeholders, including prioritizing updating the website on the status of the roadmap.

## **XI. Update on data for statistics and statistics functions**

13. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the update on the streamlining of FAO statistical functions, and took note of the actions taken, lessons learned and remaining challenges in this area;
- b) appreciated the updates on the standards, procedures and tools utilized by FAO for monitoring and reporting response rates to the FAO questionnaires, addressing data and statistical gaps, and adapting methodologies to different biomes;
- c) recognized that the official national statistics and data for statistics are a fundamental component of FAO's work, reinforced the importance of minimizing the need for data imputation and gap filling, and highlighted the importance for Members to respond to FAO questionnaires;
- d) stressed the importance for FAO to strengthen capacities of Members to fill FAO questionnaires to ensure regular and timely exercise for the inclusion of official statistics in FAO databases, to report on response rates, and to support Members in development of their statistical capacity;
- e) expressed concern over the shortage of funding for data-related activities and emphasized the urgent need to provide adequate funding from the Regular Budget for the key activities, including retaining the integrity of the FAO Data Lab and strengthening capacity at the decentralized level;
- f) requested FAO to organize technical meetings with technical counterparts of Members to identify areas in which potential adaptation of FAO statistical methodologies to different biomes or areas of research need further discussions where methods are currently not available;
- g) encouraged FAO to continue exploring innovative approaches for data collection and analysis to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, recognizing the need for ongoing quality assurance; and
- h) looked forward to regular updates on this topic at the sessions of the Committee.

## **XII. Update on Food Systems Transformation work at the FAO**

14. The Committee:

- a) welcomed and appreciated the regular update on the progress made on the adoption of a systems approach for agrifood systems transformation in line with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31;
- b) supported the three areas of work (normative knowledge products and communication; direct technical support at country level; documenting and facilitating collective learning) through which a systems approach is operationalized;



- c) encouraged FAO to continue participating in initiatives with relevant stakeholders, amongst others, to develop indicators for measuring agrifood systems change; and
- d) recommended ongoing collaboration with the Office of Evaluation regarding methodologies for future evaluations on the work of agrifood systems.

### **XIII. Update on FAO's engagement in:**

- a. the Sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 16);**
- b. the Twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29);**
- c. the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 16); and**
- d. the work with the World Trade Organization**

#### 15. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the updates on FAO's engagement in UNCCD COP 16, UNFCCC COP 29 and CBD COP 16, appreciated FAO's efforts in advocating for the implementation of agrifood systems solutions, and encouraged FAO to take an integrated approach to support Members, within its mandate, in implementing sustainable and coordinated actions across these conventions;
- b) welcomed the update on FAO's engagement in the work with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and expressed appreciation and encouraged increased enhancement for the collaboration between the two organizations, and appreciated and encouraged continued work by FAO on market and trade analysis;
- c) welcomed FAO's efforts, including through its Country Offices, in supporting countries having access to vertical funds;
- d) encouraged FAO to further raise awareness of the support provided for accessing and implementing vertical funds at the Governing Bodies;
- e) requested FAO to provide technical support to the development of indicators for vertical funds, as appropriate; and
- f) welcomed Management's willingness to provide updates to all Members and regular updates to the Programme Committee.

### **XIV. Status of outstanding recommendations of the Programme Committee**

#### 16. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the introduction of a monitoring tool of the status of outstanding recommendations of the Programme Committee, took note of the *Status of Outstanding Recommendations of the Programme Committee* as presented in document PC 140/9 and looked forward to receiving an updated status report at its next regular Session;
- b) recommended the progress report on the Biennial Theme 2024-25 *Water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, to achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals* be reported to the 177<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council and recommended the Council to review and submit it to the 44th Session of the Conference; and
- c) requested FAO to follow up on the conclusions of the 138th Session of the Programme Committee endorsed by the 175th Session of the Council on operational support to the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM).

### **XV. Date and place of the next session**

17. The Committee was informed that the next Session was scheduled to be held in Rome from 3 to 7 November 2025.

### **XVI. Any Other Matters**

18. The Committee:

- a) re-emphasized the formal request from PC Members to the Director of the Office of Evaluation for the compilation of recommendations and their status on structural reforms in both internal and external evaluations and assessments, and recommended that the request be responded before the 177th Session of the Council; and
- b) recommended that induction sessions be institutionalized for newly elected Members of the Committee.